(d) whether any steps have been taken for speedy approval by the Planning Commission for its implementation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI AJAY SINGH): (a) to (d). An Engineering-cum-Traffic Survey for a rail bridge across the river Ganga near Patna has been taken up. Further action on the project will depend upon the results of the Survey and availability of resources in the coming years.

Implementation of Essential Commodities Act

676. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the All India Advisory Council on Public Distribution System has called for sustained and effective implementation of the Essential Commodities Act to streamline the Public Distribution System in the country;

(b) if so, the reactions of the Government thereto; and

(c) what further steps Government propose to take to streamline the Public Distribution System in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Union Government has also been advising the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to undertake strict and sustained enforcement of the provisions of Essential Commodities Act and other similar legislations. The States / UTs have also been requested to continually strengthen and streamline the PDS, through activising Vigilance Committees, empowering delivery systems to fair price shops, consider supply of additional commodities of mass consumption through fair price shops and undertake constant monitoring of availability situation.

Punctuality of Trains and Amenities to Commuters

677. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the punctuality of the trains and better amenities to its commuters have been badly affected during the last six months;

(b) whether Government propose to maintain punctuality in trains and provide adequate amenities to its commuters; and

(c) if so, the details of the steps taken / propose to be taken to improve the services of trains throughout the country?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI AJAY SINGH): (a) Unavoidable causes like devastation by cyclone on East Coast, heavy unprecedented rains in Andhra Pradesh, Bombay area and Rajasthan, dense fog in January, 1990 besides Bandhs in Assam, Punjab, Tamilnadu, alarm chain pulling etc. Total power break down in West Bengal on 26-6-90 and a few equipment failures did affect the punctuality of trains. The amenities to passengers are being maintained.

(b) and (c). Yes, Sir. Monitoring and intensive chasing is continuing to improve performance.

Job Scandal Involving Indian Workers in Iraq

678. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether hundreds of Indian workers are stranded without wages and adequate amenities in Iraq due to an alleged job scandal and swindling by a Bombay based recruiting agent as

reported in the *Indian Express* dated the 19th July, 1990;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to take any action against the Bombay based recruiting agent; and

(d) what further efforts Government propose to take to enable them to get their wages etc., and bring them back in the country?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b). It is not a fact that 100 Indians were stranded recently in Iraq as reported in the *Indian Express* dated 19th July, 1990. As per the report received from the Embassy of India, Baghdad, 172 workers were deployed by one Bombay based recruiting agent to Iraq illegally without proper emigration clearance and proper employment contract. The workers so deployed are being paid less wages than promised and there is provision for only limited remittance of their salary to India.

(c) The matter has been referred to CBI for investigation.

(d) The Indian Embassy, Baghdad is, seized of the matter and are making all possible efforts.

Speedier Inter City Rail Services in the Country

679. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to implement the speedier inter city rail services in the major cities;

(b) if so, by when and the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI AJAY SINGH): (a) to (c). Introduction of new trains including fast intercity trains is a continuous process subject to operational feasibility and resource availability.

Annual loss due to leakage of revenue

680. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have suffered nearly a loss of Rs. 2000 crores annually due to leakage of revenue etc.;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps to prevent leakage of articles etc. in the railways; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI AJAY SINGH): (a) There is some leakage of railway revenue. The amount of leakage is not quantifiable.

(b) and (c). Steps taken to prevent leakage of rvenue include measures like frequent inspections, regular ticket checking including massive concentrated checks etc.

Besides, vigilance organisation conduct preventive checks in areas where leakage takes place and investigate complaints received from various sources to bring the defaulters to book.

While charges, as due, are recovered from the defaulting rail passengers, in some cases defaulters are also prosecuted.

Action is also taken against erring railway staff in proven cases of misdemeanour.

Approval to private companies for production of Seed

681. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the private companies have been making a strong bid to enter the seeds production programme in the